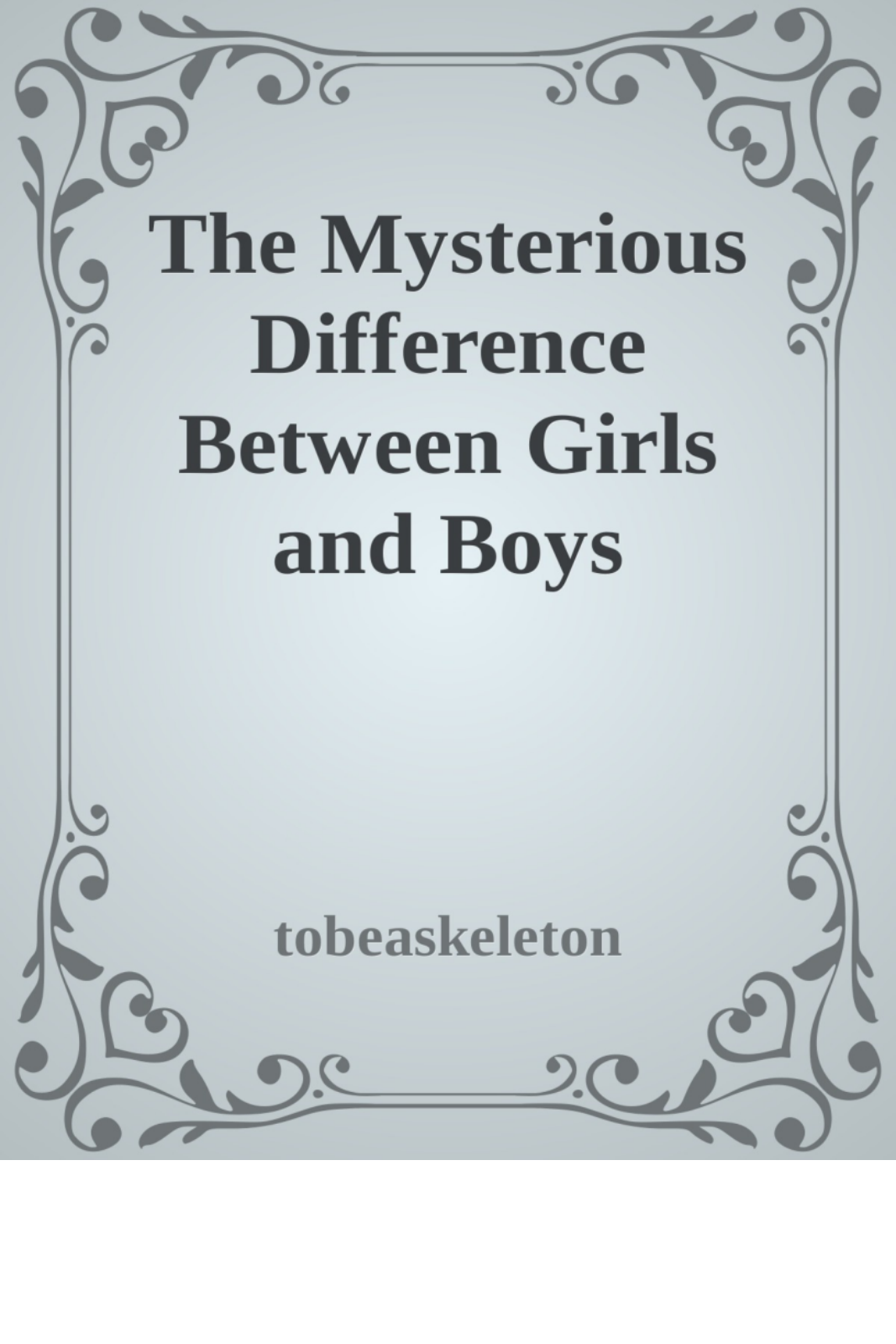


A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, rendered in a dark gray color, framing the central text.

# **The Mysterious Difference Between Girls and Boys**

**tobeasketon**

## **The Mysterious Difference Between Girls and Boys by tobeaskelton**

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**Summary:**

This pairing is so so adorable that I wanted to write a fic for it!

# The Mysterious Difference Between Girls and Boys

## Author's Note:

This pairing is so so adorable that I wanted to write a fic for it!

Eddie has never really been friends with a girl before, I mean since his mom doesn't really count, so when Bev shows up that day at the convenience store, she becomes a sort of enigmatic force in his life. In all of their lives. He thinks of what his mam tells him about girls, especially this type of girl, but he can't seem to make the mental connection between the Beverly he sees and the one known as the school slut.

He considers this on the cliff, his thoughts seeming to outgrow his awkward, scrawny body. He doesn't notice how the other guys, even Richie, are also gaping at her. That is, until she looks over, and they all know to look away. Eddie makes the mistake of glancing over at Richie, who is attempting to nonchalantly recover from slight embarrassment.

But when he sees Eddie's wide eyes, he smirks and winks at him, watching as his cheeks grow warm. Eddie knows Richie will make fun of him later, knows how stupid and red-faced he must look. But Eddie also knows what Richie won't: that his blush had little to nothing to do with Beverly and everything to do with Richie winking at him.

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Richie has never seen It before, so, he wonders to himself, why does he even bother listening to his dumbass friends? His mind was a lot more numb last year when he spent summer playing Street Fighter and sneaking Eddie out when his mom put him on quarantine.

"Maybe only virgins see this shit," he jokes, while he receives a collective eyeroll. He feels light-headed from all the clown-talk and shuts up, if only for a moment.

In Bill's garage, he sees It for the first time.

He's never felt so close to dying, It become huge while they all become so small. And holding onto Eddie, he felt even smaller, like they had merged into one, microscopic person.

Then, the garage door opens, light flooding in and disrupting the dark corners where It seemed to live. Richie can feel Eddie's ferocious heart beat, so violent that Richie worries it might explode from his tiny chest. The sun sheds on them and Eddie quickly pulls away, brushing his hands on his shorts.

Richie hates that motherfucking clown.

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The well-house is where Eddie realizes that Bev is more indignant, more like Bill, than he originally thought. Sure she had flirted with the pharmacist guy, ran off a cliff without her clothes on, but neither of those things came close to what they were facing now.

He could've sworn she was actually killing It.

His inability to form words made him feel tiny and pathetic, shriveled up in a corner, clutching his broken arm.

And then, for a moment, Richie holds his face. Like a guy does to a girl in the movies right before they kiss.

He shakes the thought out of his head, angrily, and snaps back to reality.

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The girl at the pharmacy has wide eyes, and she blows bubble gum between her lips as she writes careful letters on Eddie's cast.

Her face is so close, he can make out every scar and bump of her skin. He thinks of Richie, and the moment he was so close. And he thinks to himself that this whole time, he's been choking down "bullshit," and left his fiends for the gazebos or placebos, or whatever they're called.

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After It dies, the heat of summer turns to autumn. Richie thought that the Loser's dynamic would go back to normal to its original point of stagnation, but he finds himself struck with the sudden, scary force of maturity.

Suddenly, whenever he sees a clown, he doesn't want to run away. He wants to sucker punch it in the face. He remembers Eddie clutching his broken arm in the well-house.

Bill is totally, crazy heart-broken over Bev. So is Ben for that matter.

"What's the matter me amigo? You got blue-balls?" he asks Bill, raising an eyebrow. Bill scoffs at him. Well, apparently that wasn't the right thing to say. But Richie is used to saying the wrong things.

"She wasn't like that," Ben replies. Bill looks a little annoyed at him answering for him but let's it go.

Eddie looks distant.

"C'mon, not you too," Richie says to Eddie, raising an eyebrow. "You guys meet one girl, just one, who talks to your ugly asses and you act like this."

Stan starts to laugh at the remark. And then they're all laughing, finding a place they've lost for a long time.

Later, Eddie and Richie leave on their own, walking their bikes alongside them.

"It's so late, my mom is gonna flip her shit," Eddie relents.

"No, no, trust me, Eds. She has a soft spot for me."

"Shut up, dick," Eddie bites back. He nudges Richie with his cast, the one that he changed to say "LOVER" instead of "LOSER."

"Who wrote that, anyway?"

"What?"

Richie gestures toward the cast.

"Just some girl," Eddie replies, shrugging.

"Just some girl who called you a loser."

"She made, um, a mistake. While she was writing it."

Richie rolls his eyes. "I don't get girls. Why are you all so hung up on Bev, anyway?"

Eddie turns his head and shakes his head. "I wasn't. You know. Like she was pretty and interesting, but I don't really get it." He lets his eyes rest on Richie's.

"Get what?"

"Just... the big, grand difference between us and her. Boys and girls."

Richie shrugs. "I guess, I mean, there's the obvious one." He gestures toward his chest. Eddie flicks him with his good arm. "Ow! You didn't let me finish!" he begins. "I mean, we're, like, blood brothers. All of us. Even Bev. Like-" He grabs Eddie's palm, examining their matching scars. "So what makes us different?"

Eddie looks at his palm on top of Richie's. He's not afraid of spreading disease anymore, so he's not sure why his heart beats faster. And then his eyes nearly bulge out of his head when Richie interlocks their fingers.

The rest of the time they're walking, they're completely silently. It's quite possibly one of the longest, most drawn out silences in Eddie's life, maybe even, he thinks, of all time. So he learns to fill the silence with other things. Like sinking up their footsteps, their breathing, running his thumb over the scar on Richie's palm. Richie doing the same.

And when they get to Eddie's house, they're silent as they let go.

"I've never been that quiet in my life," Richie blurts out. Eddie smiles, saying nothing as he sighs a sigh of relief at the sight of his sleeping mother. And Richie hops on his bike, not looking back over his

shoulder as he rides the rest of his way home, not scared of the night.  
Not scared of It.